



Everglades Agricultural Area Best Management Practices Program

The goal of this program is to reduce annual phosphorus loads discharging into the Everglades from the EAA by 25 %. The phosphorus "load" is the mass of phosphorus mixed in with the runoff that is discharged into the Everglades. The annual "load" is calculated by multiplying the concentration (measured as mass per volume) of phosphorus in runoff by the volume of runoff discharged per year. The 25% reduction is to be accomplished by implementing BMPs. Annual loads are measured at the South Florida Water Management District (District) pump stations that discharge into the Everglades from the EAA. The flow through these structures and the levels of phosphorus are measured throughout the year to calculate the load or mass of phosphorus discharging into the Everglades. This load is then compared to the average annual load of the base period (October 1, 1978 – September 30, 1988) determined prior to implementation of this program. Differences in amounts and distribution of rainfall between the base period and any measured period are then taken into account.

The District has issued each parcel within the EAA a permit in accordance with Rule 40E-63, F.A.C. These permits detail the BMPs and water quality monitoring program being implemented on each farm. Farmers compare a list of BMPs, applicable for use on farms in the EAA, to crop types and drainage systems to determine which

are best suited for their farms. After appropriate BMPs are in place, records are kept to ensure accurate implementation. Each farm must also measure the flow and phosphorus levels of water discharging from the farm. This monitoring is performed to determine how well the BMPs are working.

If the EAA discharges into the Everglades meet the 25% reduction goal, then the area is determined to be in compliance with District issued permits. In accordance with the Everglades Forever Act, tax credits for the Everglades Agricultural Privilege Tax are then given to the farmers in the EAA. The Everglades Agricultural Privilege Tax is a tax on properties classified as agricultural. The intent of these credits is to provide an incentive to maximize the reduction of phosphorus loads into the Everglades.

If the EAA discharges into the Everglades do not meet the 25% reduction goal, the individual farms with the highest measured phosphorus discharge (pounds/acre) are identified and required to implement additional BMPs. If this does not achieve the reduction goal, farms with high-measured phosphorus discharges would be required to implement additional BMPs. This phased approach would continue until the EAA basin meets the annual 25% phosphorus reduction goal.